

January 31, 2018

**TO: Mayors, Wardens, Clerks, All Units**

**FR: Geoff Stewart, President, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities**

**RE: UNSM BOARD REPORT, JANUARY 26, 2018**

I am pleased to send you the UNSM Board Report from our January 26, 2018 meeting. We ask that you include this report on your Council Agenda. We would be pleased to answer any questions that may arise, or hear any comments and/or suggestions.

Also attached is the update on our initiatives report.

1. **Municipal Government Act Review:** The Department of Municipal Affairs met with the Board to discuss the status of the MGA Review and next steps. The discussion noted the need to undertake a full review of the Act and the UNSM's request to ensure the Act was enabling rather than prescriptive. A lot of work has been undertaken in the last two years, and this work lays a strong foundation for moving forward in a more holistic way.
2. **Ministers Roundtable meeting** with the UNSM Executive January 24, 2018. The Board discussed the meeting, information is included in the attached initiatives report. The Ministers in attendance included Ministers Mombourquette, Casey, MacLellan, Furey, and Rankin. The Board noted the increase in the requests UNSM is receiving from the province to work with them on major issues. Currently there are joint committees established to work with a number of departments such as:
  - a. Municipal Affairs: Municipal Modernization, MGA Review, Parental Accommodations, Accountability and Transparency, Municipal Indicators, Fire, Asset Management, Gas Tax, etc
  - b. Justice: Accessibility, Cannabis, Policing
  - c. Environment: Solid Waste, Round table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity
  - d. Business: Tourism Short Term Rental
  - e. NS Health Authority: Doctor Recruitment
  - f. Others: 211, Active Transportation, Building Advisory, Municipal Finance Corporation, PVSC

As well work is underway to establish joint committees on housing, seniors, international trade and roads.

3. **Municipal Modernization:** UNSM, AMA and the Department of Municipal Affairs are beginning a discussion on how best to move forward in helping municipalities better meet the needs of their citizens. The discussion builds on previous work such as the Towns Task Force, Fiscal Review, MGA Review, structure etc. We recognize the answers may vary across the province. A report from a workshop being held January 31 for mayors, wardens and CAO's will be shared.

4. **Parental Accommodations:** The Board supported the recommendations from the joint provincial/municipal committee on this issue. Once the recommendations are presented to the province, the committee's report will be released. The issue of compensation for new parents was raised. The Board recognized most elected officials will continue to serve their citizens in some way, and supported full compensation.
5. **UNSM Name:** The Board approved the name of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. Work will continue on the logo and branding materials, as well as the website. Until the work is complete, the old name will continue to be used.
6. **Short Term Rentals Committee Appointments:** the Department of Business asked UNSM to appoint two elected officials to serve on this committee. A number of applications were received. The Board has appointed Mayor Bill MacDonald, Annapolis Royal and Councillor Perla MacLeod, Victoria.
7. **Solid Waste:** The Board approved UNSM taking a lead in developing a proposal on extended producer responsibility with the Solid Waste Chairs and Priorities Group. The Board discussed the issue of film plastic, and will continue to explore the issue.
8. **Regional Meetings/Events:** Tentative dates have been set for regional meetings. Locations to be determined. The dates are: March 29, April 9, April 16, April 23 and April 27<sup>th</sup>. UNSM is working on an annual calendar, scheduling regional meetings and resolutions meeting, and these will be on the UNSM website. As details are finalized, they will be posted. As well the UNSM Board decided to hold monthly teleconference calls with Mayors and Wardens the last Monday of every month, to share information, ideas and concerns. More information to follow.
9. **Other Matters Discussed:** The Board discussed safety issues around motorized scooters used by physically disabled people and motorized bikes; code of conduct for municipal elected officials, electoral representation, and the status of UNSM initiatives.

# UNSM Initiatives Report – January 26, 2018

**UNSM Vision:** *Effective local government and strong, sustainable communities*

**UNSM Mission:** *To enable effective local government for Nova Scotia's communities by facilitating strategic advocacy, education and collaboration*

## Initiatives

### 1. Partnership Framework

#### **Description/Update**

The Ministers Roundtable met with the UNSM Executive January 24, 2018. Ministers attending included: Minister Derek Mombourquette (Municipal Affairs); Minister Karen Casey (Finance); Minister Geoff MacLellan (Business); Minister Mark Furey (Justice); and Minister Iain Rankin (Environment). At this meeting, the terms of reference for the Roundtable were revised, integrating the UNSM resolutions process into the schedule of meetings and establishing the Roundtable as the forum to monitor progress under the Partnership Framework. A consultation guide for the development of new legislation and regulations impacting municipalities was agreed to with Municipal Affairs, along with a progress report of the Partnership Framework. These documents are being finalized and will be distributed at a later date.

### 2. Resolutions and Statements of Interest

#### **Description/Update**

Five resolutions were sent to the Province as approved at the UNSM Fall Conference and focus on CAP; Connectivity; Doctor Shortages; Municipal Funding; and Roads. In addition, resolutions on affordable housing and the governance of PVSC were approved. The Ministers Roundtable meeting discussed the resolutions and a formal reply will be forthcoming.

UNSM is currently planning workshops on physician recruitment for the spring, and one on connectivity in the fall.

Statements of Municipal Concern have been sent to the ministers responsible for housing, agriculture, deer, regional enterprise networks and regional planning.

Discussions are underway to establish joint provincial/municipal committees on roads, and housing. UNSM is participating in an agricultural land use committee under the Federation of Agriculture.

Other topics were identified through the resolutions process last year, and UNSM is monitoring a number of these. Work continues on the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Seniors.

### **3. Cannabis Legalization**

#### **Description/Update**

The Joint Municipal Provincial Committee on Cannabis met November 17, 2017 and another is being scheduled in early February.

In the meantime, the UNSM/AMA Municipal Cannabis Working Group has been meeting. Based on the work of the committee, the UNSM Board has sent letters to the Ministers of Justice and Municipal Affairs expressing concerns over funding and providing information about the potential impact on municipalities. In addition, the Committee Chair, Councillor Shawn Cleary, provided feedback on Health Canada's proposed regulatory regime for the cultivation and processing of cannabis, which will be federally regulated. These letters are available on the UNSM website, under the policy section.

### **4. Fire Services Review**

#### **Description/Update**

The Board approved appointments to the NS Joint Municipal Fire Services Committee Phase I. Those appointed to represent UNSM are: Councillor Jennifer Daniels, District of West Hants, and Councillor Wayne Thorburne, Bridgewater. All committee members have now been appointed, and a meeting is being scheduled.

### **5. Accessibility Act**

#### **Description/Update**

Municipalities will need to implement the requirements under the new Act. A Joint Provincial/Municipal Committee is being formed to assist municipalities in fulfilling their requirements under the Act. The UNSM Board appointed Councillor Laurie Cranton, County of Inverness, Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville, and Councillor George MacDonald, CBRM, to the committee. The first meeting of the committee is scheduled for February 15, 2018.

### **6. Parental Accommodations Committee**

The Parental Accommodations Committee held two teleconference sessions to receive feedback from UNSM members on their proposed recommendations. As well feedback was received through emails and letters. The Committee finalized their recommendations, which were presented to the UNSM Board January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Based on the feedback received, the Committee finalized their recommendations and submitted them to the Minister of Municipal

Affairs. These recommendations are being presented to the Department of Municipal Affairs in the next week or so, and will be shared with all municipalities at that time.

## **7. Asset Management**

UNSM continues to support municipalities with asset management planning, as a requirement of the 2014-24 Gas Tax Fund Agreement. FCM recently confirmed approval of funding from its [Municipal Asset Management Program](#) (MAMP) to UNSM to provide basic training and skill development resources to Nova Scotia municipalities to support them in implementing sound asset management practices. UNSM held its first two MAMP-funded activities on November 7 (a 2-hour workshop on the role of staff in asset management planning) and November 8. Work is underway to produce an online course for elected officials around asset management, and the results of the pilot project on measuring linear assets are being compiled, to be shared with municipalities.

## **8. Upcoming Events**

[FCM's Sustainable Communities Conference](#), Feb. 6-8, 2018 in Ottawa